



GET HIRED: DEVELOP GREAT INTERVIEW SKILLS!

FACILITATOR GUIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

This 40 minute session introduces students to the interview process. Techniques to develop effective interview skills will be outlined with the importance of advance preparation and a positive first impression being emphasized. (While interviews for employment purposes are most common, this lesson also emphasizes the vast array of other opportunities that may involve an interview and presents information suitable for the preparation of those interviews as well.)

Note: This session may be followed with a mock interview experience for students using the Pick Up and Go Kit “Get Prepared: Practice Your Interview Skills!”.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to identify a variety of opportunities that may require an interview.
2. Students will be able to explain the purpose of an interview.
3. Students will recognize what needs to be prepared prior to attending an interview.
4. Students will learn how to present a positive first impression at an interview.
5. Students will develop an awareness of typical interview questions.

MATERIALS

Handout 1 – Q & A Preparation – Know Your Stuff!

Handout 2 – Shout Out!

Handout 3 – Give Yourself an Edge – Quick Tips for Great Interviews!

Sticky notes – one per student

Teacher Reference: “Job Seeker’s Handbook: An Introductory Guide to Finding Work” available to order at www.alis.alberta.ca



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OVERVIEW AND TIMELINES

Introduction – Interview Basics	5 Minutes
Give Yourself an “Edge”:	
Preparation – Know Your Stuff!	20 Minutes
Presentation – First Impressions Count!	10 Minutes
Wrap Up	5 Minutes

ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION – INTERVIEW BASICS

As an introduction to interviews, ask the students the following questions.

What is an interview?

A meeting where questioning is used to exchange information. While the interviewer will lead the questioning process, both the interviewer and the candidate will answer and ask questions. Typically it is used as one of the steps in the process of selecting an individual for a specific opportunity, such as a job.

How do you get an interview?

Usually through one of, or a combination of, the following: application, cover letter, resume. It may possibly be obtained through a personal referral or recommendation.

What is the purpose of an interview?

*For the interviewer and the candidate to **meet** each other, **ask** each other questions, and **gather** information from each other. The information gathered will be used by both parties to make a decision regarding the opportunity for which the interview was held.*

For what opportunities could an interview be held?

Explain that while interviews are most often held for employment opportunities there are numerous other occasions when interviews may be conducted to select appropriate candidates. These include volunteering, Off-campus Programs (RAP, Work Experience), school leadership, school trips, travel exchanges, post-secondary entrance, scholarships, practicums.....

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GIVE YOURSELF AN “EDGE” – A FORMULA FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS!

Explain to students that the goal for an interview candidate is to prove to the interviewer that he or she is the best individual for the position. To do this successfully the candidate must set him or herself apart from all the other candidates by creating an “edge”.

Indicate that there are two important factors that will provide students with an advantage, or “edge”, in any type of interview setting. When combined, these two factors will increase the likelihood of attaining positive and successful interview experiences. These two important factors are: PREPARATION and PRESENTATION.

PREPARATION – KNOW YOUR STUFF!

Inform students that to build confidence before going to an interview it is very important to develop a clear idea of what they want to say about themselves and what they want to learn about the job, opportunity, business or organization. This is done by preparing in advance – time well spent!

Analogy:

Using the analogy of an actor auditioning for a role in a play, a movie or a T.V. show, explain that an actor will take time to carefully learn and rehearse the lines as well as create an image suitable to the character being auditioning for. If the actor does this successfully, the director will be impressed and the role will be awarded to this actor. Explain to the students that, just like this actor, it is important for them to spend time planning for their “audition” at an interview – their image and their “lines”. Remind students that interviews they have now are excellent practice and preparation for interviews they will have as adults.

***Note:** Remind students that it is ideal for them to target a job or opportunity that will either utilize their interests, skills and experiences or develop transferable skills for their future benefit. If the student has no particular interest in the job or opportunity this lack of interest may be transparent in the interview and be judged negatively by the interviewer. Reinforce with students that by actively seeking opportunities they are genuinely interested in they will be more enthusiastic and motivated to prepare for the interview and present a positive first impression.*

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Ask students to list the advantages of taking the time ahead of an interview to prepare and plan.

- *Demonstrates organization*
- *Builds confidence*
- *Decreases nervousness*
- *Increases knowledge of self, strengths and skills*
- *Links skills and strengths to requirements of new position*
- *Displays sincere interest*
- *Answer questions quickly and easily*
- *Answer questions genuinely*

Indicate to students that there are two parts to interview preparation:

- 1. Preparation of answers to interview questions**
- 2. Preparation of questions to ask the interviewer**

Preparation of Answers:

Explain to students that it is possible to prepare answers to interview questions because many of the same questions are asked in most, if not all, interviews. Emphasize that advance preparation will assist them in providing appropriate, detailed answers that are relevant to the job or opportunity. This will increase their confidence and allow their energy and enthusiasm to show.

Tell students that every question asked in an interview has a particular purpose. Ask students what interviewers would like to learn about them through the interview questions asked.

Facilitator's Top Up List

- The kind of person you are
- Your abilities, skills, experiences
- How you would handle or whether you have handled certain situations
- Determine interest level in job or opportunity
- What your future goals and plans are
- Your knowledge of the company / organization
- Learn your expectations of the job or opportunity
- How you react to unexpected questions

Distribute **Q & A Preparation – Know Your Stuff!** (Handout 1)

Review the list of questions in the first box of the handout with the students.



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Tell Me About Yourself Activity

Inform students that interviewers will often begin interviews by inviting candidates to share some information about themselves. This is one of the most challenging questions, for both youth and adult, to answer well in an interview. Because there is so much that one could say, it is difficult, but very important, to select just the right things that an interviewer would be most interested in learning. In most situations the answer to the question should not take longer than one minute.

Distribute **Shout Out!** (Handout 2)

Instruct students to work individually for five minutes to complete the activity on the handout. Invite two or three students to present their answers to the class by using the information they recorded on the handout. If time allows, pair the students and have them introduce themselves to their partners using the recorded information as practice for answering the typical interview question “Would you please tell me about yourself?”.

Preparation of Questions:

Indicate to the students that the second part of preparation is gaining knowledge of the business or organization and the job or opportunity itself and then preparing questions to ask the interviewer based on what you have learned or not learned.

Ask the students, why is it important to develop knowledge of the business or organization?

- *Demonstrates interest in the business or organization and personal motivation.*

Ask the students, why is it important to prepare questions to ask an interviewer during the interview?

- *Demonstrates interest in knowing the details of the job. Displays confidence and assertiveness. Indicates the desire to make an informed decision. Demonstrates research and preparedness.*

Review the list of potential questions to ask in the second box of **Q & A Preparation – Know Your Stuff!** (Handout 1).

PRESENTATION – FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT!

Advise students that interviewers will form an impression of interview candidates, based on their personal presentation, beginning from the first second they meet the candidate and that within two minutes most will have made a decision regarding the selection of the candidate.

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Ask students, why is it so important to create a positive first impression?

- *Once an initial impression is formed by the interviewer, either positive or negative, it is extremely difficult to reverse the judgment made toward the candidate – it is difficult to undo a bad first impression!*

Distribute one sticky note to each student. Instruct students to write two ideas that would create a positive first impression in an interview situation on to the sticky note and then stick the note on the board. Indicate to students that the ideas can include things to be sure to do but also things to be sure *not* to do. Review the students' responses as a group. List and discuss additional ideas from the "Facilitator's Top Up List".

Alternate Activities:

1. *Working in pairs, allow students 2 – 3 minutes to quickly record any ideas that would help create a positive first impression. List a collection of their ideas on the board adding ideas from the "Facilitator's Top Up List".*
2. *As a group / class, brainstorm ways to create a positive first impression in an interview situation recording a list of these ideas on the board. List additional ideas from the "Facilitator's Top Up List".*

<u>Facilitator's Top Up List</u>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TO DO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive on time Bring a copy of resume Wait patiently Dress appropriately Clothes – neat, clean Good hygiene (hair, hands, nails, breath, etc.) Firm handshake Eye contact Smile Demonstrate enthusiasm Stand tall Introduce self clearly Listen carefully Be polite, use manners Manage nervousness 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>NOT TO DO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be late Wear sloppy, dirty clothing Wear clothing with graphics or slogans Wear immodest or revealing clothing Wear heavy makeup Wear too many piercings Display tattoos Wear a hat Wear scents (perfume, cologne, other aromas like smoke, etc.) Chew gum Use slang or swear Answer cell phone or text Take iPod, MP3, etc. Interrupt Fidget

Explain that before the questioning even begins the image you present – clothes, grooming, posture, walk, facial expression, mannerisms – will strongly impact the



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interviewer's impression of you. 55% (over half!) of a first impression is formed by appearance, or visual presentation, alone! 38% is formed by tone of voice and 7% by words spoken. Clearly and enthusiastically introducing yourself with a firm handshake and a smile on your face demonstrates confidence, energy and friendliness – all qualities that will create a very positive first impression!

Closing Impressions Count Too!

Emphasize to students that the note on which they leave the interview can impact the final impression they leave on the interviewer. Thanking the interviewer for his or her time and offering a final firm handshake will create an excellent closing impression and allow you to leave the interview on a positive note. The practice of writing a brief thank you note to the interviewer is also recommended as an interview follow up.

WRAP UP

In summary, review with the students that advance preparation (including preparing answers to questions that will best showcase and prove their relevant skills, experiences and enthusiasm **and** preparing questions to ask) plus presenting a positive first impression will give them an advantage or “edge” in any interview situation.

Distribute and review **“Give Yourself an Edge – Quick Tips for Great Interviews!”** (Handout 3)

To clarify that the learning objectives have been accomplished, ask the students these questions:

Are you aware of the variety of opportunities that may require an interview in order to select an appropriate candidate?

Do you understand how to create a positive first impression in an interview situation?

Are you aware of the basic or typical questions often asked in interview situations?

Can you provide an effective answer to the question “Would you please tell me about yourself?”

Have you learned the importance of preparing specific questions to ask in an interview?



Q & A PREPARATION – KNOW YOUR STUFF!

Prepare answers to interview questions and questions to ask – knowing your stuff will impress interviewers!

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

You may be asked a number of typical questions during an interview. How would you answer the following questions? Be prepared!

1. Would you please tell me about yourself?
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. List three skills that you would bring to this position. How did you develop these skills?
4. What do you understand the main responsibilities of this position to be?
5. What is an area of weakness that you possess?
6. What do you know about this business / organization?
7. Can you tell me about a time when you contributed to a team effort?
8. Can you tell me about a time when you resolved a conflict with another individual?
9. What are your plans for the future?
10. Why should I hire you?

Handout 1

Most interviewers will allow you an opportunity near the end of the interview to ask questions. What do you want to know about the job or opportunity, or the business or organization? Be prepared!



1. What are the responsibilities of this position?
2. What would a typical day look like?
3. What kind of training do you provide?
4. What is the expected dress code?
5. What will be the days and hours of work?
6. What skills would a top candidate for this position have?
7. What are the hazards of this type of work?
8. What do you enjoy most about your position?

Note: Questions about pay, benefits and vacation should be left until the position is offered to you!

"Would you please tell me about yourself?"
Create your own interview **"SHOUT OUT!"**



prepared

INTRODUCE:

"Some things you might be interested in knowing about me are that ..."

confident

IMPACT:

Experience: _____

Knowledge, Skills, Personality Traits, Attitude developed: _____

***Impact* the interviewer!**

- Let the interviewer know right away that you've got what it takes for the job!
- Write down an experience you have had plus the knowledge, skills, personality traits or attitude it has developed in you that match the requirements of the specific position.

enthusiastic

***Impress* the interviewer!**

- Highlight something about you that shows your enthusiasm and energy – makes you memorable!
- List a fun, interesting or unique pastime or activity you are involved in OR a plan you have for your future.

IMPRESS:

Activity: _____

AND / OR

Future Plan: _____

energetic

positive

**“Would you please tell me about yourself?”
“SHOUT OUT!” EXAMPLES**



I love cooking. I really enjoy trying new things and trying to improve on recipes. I also love recreating over and over the ones that everyone already loves. Last summer I worked out at a summer camp in the kitchen as an assistant so I learned a lot about cooking in huge quantities and under a lot of pressure sometimes! Maybe I will even own my own restaurant one day!

Amazing!

I love all kinds of sports especially team sports like volleyball and basketball. I was on my school teams this year. I also play competitive soccer in the spring and summer. Being involved in sports has taught me a lot about teamwork, discipline, and taking on leadership. Because I enjoy sports so much I think I would really enjoy working as a sales associate at your sports store. Also, I am trying something new this year – I am registered to go into a triathlon so am training for that.

Terrific!

One of the best things I have been involved in this year was my school’s drama production. I was really excited to get a small acting role in the play and I worked hard so I would do well – and I did! I learned a lot about working as a team member, having good communication skills and I also gained a lot of confidence! I think that all of those could help me when working in a store. I am also quite creative and LOVE clothes so working in a clothing store would be a dream job for me right now!

Fantastic!

When I am not in school I spend a lot of time at the motocross track. I started racing competitively four years ago and I have won over 17 races since then. I think I have been able to do that because I have worked hard and really focused on getting better. All that hard work has paid off! Also, I live on a cow calf farm – I think that is where I learned to work so hard because I have to help with chores every day no matter what!

WOW!

Great!



GIVE YOURSELF AN “EDGE”

Quick Tips for Great Interviews!

Preparation + Presentation = Positive Interview Experiences

PREPARATION – KNOW YOUR STUFF!

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

- Think about what skills, experiences and/or interests you have that will make you a good candidate for the job or opportunity.
- Think about **why** you want this job or opportunity and what you can offer that may be different from other candidates.
- Review the list of typical interview questions and think about what you might say as an answer to each of them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Think about what you need to know about the job or opportunity, the business or organization that will help you decide if it is right for you.
- Write down at least 2 – 3 questions to ask at the interview.
- Avoid asking questions about pay, benefits or vacation during the interview.

PRESENTATION – FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT!

TO DO:

- Arrive on time
- Bring a copy of resume
- Wait patiently
- Dress appropriately
- Clothes – neat, clean
- Good hygiene (hair, hands, nails, breath, etc.)
- Firm handshake
- Eye contact
- Smile
- Demonstrate enthusiasm
- Stand tall
- Introduce self clearly
- Listen carefully
- Be polite, use manners
- Manage nervousness

NOT TO DO:

- Be late
- Wear sloppy, dirty clothing
- Wear clothing with graphics or slogans
- Wear immodest or revealing clothing
- Wear heavy makeup
- Wear too many piercings
- Display tattoos
- Wear a hat
- Wear scents (perfume, cologne, other aromas like smoke, etc.)
- Chew gum
- Use slang or swear
- Answer cell phone or text
- Take iPod, MP3, etc.
- Interrupt
- Fidget